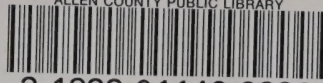






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GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN  
GERMAN-SPEAKING LANDS

*A Symposium*

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# GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN GERMAN- SPEAKING LANDS

*A Symposium*

The *Quarterly* is fortunate to offer the following Symposium on genealogical research in German-speaking lands. Since so many of our 18th century settlers were of German birth or parentage, a knowledge of sources in the ancestral countries is essential. The great influx of German, Austrian, and Swiss immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries has added considerably to the Germanic element in our present population.

Each of the contributors to the Symposium is an authority in his own right. Dr. Owen, to whom we are greatly indebted for assembling this series of articles, has been Professor of Education for many years at Temple University, Philadelphia. In 1954-55 he was Visiting Professor at the historic University of Marburg, Germany, and in 1956-57 was Exchange Professor at the University of Hamburg. Baron von Frank, of Austria, is one of the leading European genealogists and Editor of the *Senftenegger Monatsblatt für Genealogie und Heraldik*. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists and an Honorary Member of the Société Généalogique Canadienne Française, of Montréal. Dr. Braun, of Kaiserslautern, has devoted considerable attention to the origins of American immigrants in the 18th century. His field is the former principality known as the Electoral Palatinate of the Rhine. In his contribution to the Symposium, the genealogical table illustrating the relationships of the Cloter and other families has been worked into the text, in order to save printing costs. Dr. Krebs, Director of the Bayerisches Staatsarchiv (Bavari-

an State Archives) at Speyer, is well-known in this country for his articles in *The Pennsylvania Dutchman* and other periodicals relating to the places of origin of 18th century German colonists, and for his useful booklet, *Emigrants from the Palatinate to the American Colonies in the 18th Century*, which was published in 1953 by the Pennsylvania German Society under the editorship of the undersigned. Dr. Friederichs, of Frankfurt-Eschersheim, is Editor-in-Chief of *Hessische Familienkunde*, an important periodical dealing with Hessian genealogy published cooperatively by the Gesellschaft für Familienkunde in Kurhessen und Waldeck, the Familienkundliche Gesellschaft für Nassau und Frankfurt, the Vereinigung für Familien- und Wappenkunde zu Fulda, and the Hessische Familiengeschichtliche Vereinigung. He is also the editor of *Präsident Dwight D. Eisenhowers Vorfahren und Verwandte*, printed in 1955 by Verlag Degener & Co., at Neustadt/Aisch, near Nuremberg. Dr. Heldmann, of Gross Biberau, Odenwald, Hessen, is a specialist in the genealogy of the former principality of Hessen-Darmstadt. Dr. Ruoff, of Zürich, is an authority on Swiss genealogy. The final article in the series, by Mr. Coddington of our Society and the undersigned, illustrates the progress of genealogical research in Nazi Germany and the creation of the *Ahnennpass*, or Ancestor Passport.

To a certain extent, the articles by the several authors necessarily overlap, but every effort has been made to reduce this problem to a minimum.

—MILTON RUBINCAM

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## 1. GENEALOGICAL SOURCES IN GERMAN-SPEAKING LANDS: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

By RALPH DORNFELD OWEN

Is there any interest in America in genealogical research in German-speaking lands?

Until 1900, measured by the number of genealogies published, it was meager. The number of books dealing with families of German descent was less than 10 per cent of those dealing with families of British descent. Today, however, there are signs of increasing interest.

There are millions of persons in the United States whose ancestors came from German-speaking lands after 1800, and there are a million or more whose ancestors came before the Revolution. These latter are not easily identified by their names, because the newcomers often, voluntarily or involuntarily, changed their names. A few cases will serve to illustrate this: Armstädt (Armistead), a distinguished Virginia family; Brumbach (Brumbaugh), a distinguished Pennsylvania family<sup>1</sup>; Gutknecht (Goodnight), Pennsylvania; Hörsche (Hershey), chocolate candy manufacturer and philanthropist, Hershey, Pa.; Huber (Hoover), President Herbert Hoover's family; Krampf (Cramp), family of John H. Cramp, designer of the *New Ironsides*, 1862; Liebering (Levering), Pennsylvania; Lück (Lick), family of James Lick, founder of Lick Observatory; Oehrle (Early), President of the Milwaukee R. R., 1900; Pannebecker (Pennypacker), Governor of Pennsylvania; Reichert (Richards), Congressman from Berks Co., Pa., 1807; Rübenkam, now Rubincam of Pennsylvania and Revercomb of Virginia; Tisen (Tyson), Germantown, Pa.; Wüster (Wister, Wistar), a distinguished Pennsylvania family; Zahn (Zane), founder of Zanesville, Ohio.

Then, too, the descendants of the German immigrants have intermarried with persons of other national origins. Sociologically, these afford most interesting studies. An example is Samuel K. Brecht's *Genealogical Record of the Schwenkfelder Families who fled from*

*Silesia to Saxony and thence to Pennsylvania, 1731-37*, a quarto volume of 1500 pages or more devoted to 50 families. It was possible to include their German background because they had come as a compact group and had remained such for two centuries. Interesting is the evidence of intermarriage with non-German stock. The Index lists 40,000 names of individuals. Sampling letter A, I found that genuine German names represented 80 per cent, British surnames 10 per cent, of doubtful origin, 10 per cent. Many more genealogies dealing with the German element in our composite population will appear, once the German sources are made available.

Turning now to the specific problems of research in Germany, the American genealogist will find the following reference books to be indispensable: (1) a detailed contemporary gazetteer such as MEYERS *Orts- und Verkehrs Lexikon* (Place and Travel Lexicon), which lists every place of 100 inhabitants or more, giving its district, province, post office, railroad station, and seat of government, or MEYER'S or MÜLLER'S *Grosses deutsches Ortsbuch*; (2) an historical atlas, such as RITTER'S *Geographisches-statistisches Lexikon* (Ritter's Geographical-Statistical Lexicon), published at Leipzig, Wigand Co., 1905-6, 9th revised edition, 2 vols., and, for larger places and provinces, CHAMBERS'S *World Gazetteer and Geographical Dictionary* (London, W. & R. Chambers, 1954), *The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1955), and *Webster's Geographical Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass., G. & C. Merriam Co., 1955); (4) *Deutsches Geschlechterbuch* (German Book of Generations), subtitle, *Genealogisches Handbuch Bürgerlicher Familien* (Genealogical Handbook of Middle-Class Families), Berlin-Charlottenburg, F. Mahler (119 volumes, the last published in 1943).<sup>2</sup> The firm of C. A.

<sup>1</sup> The historian of this family was the late distinguished Editor of the QUARTERLY, Dr. Gaius Marcus Brumbaugh. M.R.

<sup>2</sup> A cumulative index for vols. 1-50, inclusive, was published in four volumes about 1928. A complete set of the *Geschlechterbuch* is in the Library of Congress.



Starke Verlag, Glücksburg/Ostsee, has announced that it will continue to publish the *Deutsches Geschlechterbuch* as a new series. Fifteen volumes are being prepared, the first of which, dealing with Baden, has appeared.

The American researcher must bear in mind the following essential points:

(1) *The exact location of the place where his family lived.*

As an example, Mr. Lou Kemnitz, of Green Bay, Wis., asked to get the background of his maternal grandparents, Christopher and Anna (Miller) Simons, who, he said, had migrated from Blankenheim, Lower Franconia, Bavaria, to Wisconsin in 1843. *Meyers Orts- u. Verkehrs Lexikon* showed that there was no such place in Lower Franconia, but I did find it in the area of Köln (Cologne), district of Düren, on the Belgian border, 40 miles S. W. of Köln, about 200 miles from where he thought it was. What confused him and his relatives was that the dialect spoken in the region of Düren is the "Lower Frankish" dialect.

(2) *The political history of the place.* For this, one must consult an historical atlas or a large encyclopedia. To illustrate: In 1935 I employed a genealogist to trace my wife's maternal ancestry as far back as possible.<sup>3</sup> Her grandparents had come to America from the Kingdom of Hanover. He was able to trace the family from Bremen to Billigshausen near Göttingen and reported that there were no traces of them before 1724. Last year, another genealogist commissioned by me found that about 1720 the family lived in Oberbilligshausen, which lay within Hanover but was not subject to Hanover. It belonged to an enclave held by the Counts of Plesse until 1571, when it passed to the Landgraves of Hesse. After the reforms of 1806-13 had abolished the last traces of feudalism by subordinating some 3000 petty rulers to the governments of the lands in which they sat, the enclave of Oberbilligshausen in 1816 became subject to the House of Hanover. The archives of the Plesse regime remained in the Göttingen archives for some years, but in 1953 they were transferred to Marburg.

(3) *Whether the subject of the search*

*was baptized Protestant or Roman Catholic.* For a person born in Germany after 1 Jan. 1876, complete records are available in the *Standesamt* (literally, "the office which keeps a record of every resident's status"), which is a city or county bureau of vital statistics. It keeps a perpetual census, including every resident's birth, marital status, occupation, residence, and death. Before 1876 vital statistics were recorded in the church, Protestant or Roman Catholic, *e.g.* in the case of the above-mentioned Christopher Simons, a known Catholic, the Catholic pastor at Blankenheim sent me the information Mr. Kemnitz desired, all for \$5.00!

(4) *Whether the church records are still in the care of the local clergyman (Pfarrer, pastor), or whether they have been deposited in a central regional archive.* There is no rule about this. For example, records concerning my Schwebel-Schwefel ancestors were received from the Protestant pastor at Freienwald-on-Oder, in Prussia, and from a local genealogist, Dr. Adam Heldmann, who is custodian for the older records, both ecclesiastical and civil, in the parish of Gross Bieberau, Odenwald, Hesse. In other cases, church registers are preserved in a central regional archive, such as the State Archives at Marburg.

(5) *Whether the family name has variants.* My ancestors went by the name of Schwebel in Hesse (their descendants there still spell it that way) and by the name of Schwefel in Prussia. The former is the correct spelling, because the name signifies "the little Swabian". The latter spelling is the result of the pronunciation used by their neighbors in their local dialect in Prussia. Similarly, another of my ancestral families originally went by the name of "Dürrenfeld" but in Prussia it became "Dornfeld". Again, the earlier spelling is the better, because the name signifies "the person who lives on a dry, high-lying field".

During the 1930's the Nazi Government required every person to file his pedigree back to and including his great-great-grandparents. It stimulated interest in genealogy, and a number of new organizations and publications sprang up, which, however, did not survive the war.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Owen's maiden nam was Hillemann. M.R.

A number of organizations founded before the war have survived and are active. Every state or "Land" has one or more genealogical associations. Most of them are represented in the national body, *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der genealogischen Verbände Deutschlands* (Co-Operative Union of Genealogical Associations of Germany) at Hanover.

An important periodical, *Der Deutsche Herold* (The German Herald), published by the *Deutscher Herold Verein* (German Herald Association), appeared in Berlin from 1870 to 1943. After being discontinued for 10 years, it is being published again with Dr. Ottfried Neubecker, Lecturer on the History of Art in the Free University of West Berlin and President of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (mentioned above) as Editor-in-Chief.

Another important organization is the *Zentralstelle für deutsche Personen und Familiengeschichte* (Central Office for History of German Persons and Families). It published bibliographies entitled *Familiengeschichtliche Bibliographie* (Family History Bibliography), 1900-38, and resumed publication in 1954. The printing is being done by Degener & Co., Neustadt on Aisch, Bavaria. In 1929 the *Zentralstelle* began the preparation of a card-index of emigrants. Its valuable periodical, *Familiengeschichtliche Blätter*, was issued for about 40 years, beginning in 1903.

During my year as Visiting Professor of Education at the University of Marburg (1954-55), I made a special study of genealogical resources and genealogists in German-speaking lands. At Frankfurt-am-Main, which was an important city as early as 1150, when the great nobles met there to elect the famous Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and now is the busy metropolis of Hesse, there is an active genealogical association, *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für hessische Familienkunde* (Co-Operative Union for Hessian Family Study). The leading genealogist of this organization is Dr. Heinz F. Friederichs, Editor of *Hessische Familienkunde*, Vice-President of the Union of German Genealogists, one of the editors of the monumental *Deutsches Geschlechterbuch*, and the chief author of a genealogy of the Eisenhower family.

Marburg also lies in Hesse, on the Lahn River, 60 miles north of Frankfurt-am-Main. The Lahn is a placid stream, inviting to recreation and pleasure. The Main is a powerful stream, carrying ships and barges of international commerce. Their streams seem to have determined the nature of the two cities. Life in Marburg, a lovely medieval place, moves at a more leisurely pace than life in the metropolis.

The University of Marburg, however, is alive with scientific and historical research. On the occasion of its 400th anniversary, in 1927, it established an Institute for Research in Medieval and Early Modern History. Prof. Edmund Stengel, the Institute's first director and organizer, who served it for more than 25 years, is retired but still active. In 1927 he set forth the aims of the Institute, as follows: "to study the history, the geography, the dialects, and the customs of the region of Hesse and Nassau".<sup>4</sup> The Institute is still engaged in this project. Since it involves the history of every parcel of land from its earliest mention in the archives to the present, the study serves genealogical as well as cultural and historical purposes. So long ago as 1930 Prof. Stengel proposed to the convention of German archivists that every Archive make use of the Institute's facilities (it has the finest equipment for photographic reproduction and map-making) to have its valuable documents reproduced by a photographic process and to exchange copies, so as to save the precious original from being worn out and to have a certified copy if ever the original should be lost.<sup>5</sup>

The Marburg State Archive (*Staatsarchiv*) is housed in an excellent building erected in 1936. During World War II many of its records were stored elsewhere. Some church registers were stored in a saltpeter mine; a few of them were badly affected by the moisture, so that the pages could not be opened. Book experts are now patiently restoring them. The

<sup>4</sup> Edmund E. Stengel, "Landesgeschichte, Mundartenforschung, und Volkskunde von Hessen und Nassau", reprint from *Nassauische Heimatblätter* 1927, Heft 4.

<sup>5</sup> Edmund E. Stengel, "Über den Plan einer Zentralstelle für die Lichtbildaufnahme der älteren Urkunden auf deutschem Boden", reprint from *Minerva-Zeitschrift*, 6. Jahrgang, 1930, Heft 3/4 (Verlag Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin, W.10).



State Archive possesses the archives of the territories which made up the 19th century Electorate of Hessen, and it has on deposit the archives of the City of Marburg, the University of Marburg (including matriculation rolls from 1527<sup>o</sup>), communes, parishes, hospitals, pious foundations, and noble families. It contains also military records, an important source for Americans claiming descent from Hessian soldiers who fought for King George III in our Revolutionary War.

The Odenwald in Hesse is a picturesque region stretching south from Darmstadt almost to Heidelberg. My Schwebel ancestors, who were traced to about 1550 by Dr. Heldmann, lived at Gross Bieberau, in the Odenwald. When Mrs. Owen and I spent a weekend there, we met the mayor of Niederhausen-Lichtenberg, Mr. Balthasar Schwebel, a kinsman in the 7th degree. Most people assume that all emigration from Western Germany during the 18th century moved westward across the Atlantic. Such was not the case. While tens of thousands went west to America, thousands went east to Prussia, the one German state that promised them security and land. For example, Johann August Schwebel, his wife and her parents in 1748 migrated to Prussia, where each family head received a small grant of land. A century later his grandchildren migrated from Prussia to the United States. The Eisenhauer (Eisenhower) family also lived in the Odenwald. It was smarter than the Schwebel family. Hans Nicolaus Eisenhauer and family left the Odenwald in 1741 and migrated to America. Result? One of their descendants became President of the United States.

At Kaiserslautern, about 100 miles from Frankfurt, west across the Rhine almost to the Saar region, is located the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Pfälzischer Familienforscher* (Co-Operative Union of Palatine Genealogists), an organization much interested in the migration of Palatines to America in the 18th century. Dr. Fritz Braun, Director of the Archives there, maintains an active correspondence with American genealogists. He has built up

a card index of names and facts pertaining to emigrants. He is editor of the periodical *Mitteilungen zur Wanderungsgeschichte der Pfälzer* (Notes on the Emigration of Palatines).

Speyer, an historic city 60 miles south of Frankfurt, contains the archives of an area which in the 18th century was called Rhenish Bavaria. It is now a part of the State of Rheinland-Pfalz (Rhineland-Palatinate). Dr. Friedrich Krebs, Director of the Archives, is much interested in the early migrations to America. He published valuable articles in the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society's Yearbooks for 1936 and 1951, has contributed articles on emigrants to *The Pennsylvania Dutchman* (published by The Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center, Inc., Lancaster, Pa.), and in 1955 wrote "A List of Emigrants from the District of Oppenheim am Rhein" for *Hessische Familienkunde*, vol. 3, no. 6. In 1953 he collaborated with Mr. Milton Rubincam of the National Genealogical Society in publishing *Emigrants from the Palatinate to the American Colonies in the 18th Century* (Norristown, Pennsylvania German Society, 32 pp.).

In October 1954 I spent two days at Castle Senftenegg, near Ferschnitz, Lower Austria, about 75 miles N. W. of Vienna, as the guest of Baron von Frank. He is the author of the *Kress Family History* (in two editions, German and English), a magnificent volume of 1700 pages, with more than 800 illustrations, tracing the family from the 13th century to the present. The project was financed by Samuel H. Kress (1863-1955), of Pennsylvania, founder of the Kress Stores, Inc.

I was much impressed with Baron von Frank's collection of transcripts and photostats of official records, both German and Austrian. All of the names in them have been entered in a card catalog. Sampling the catalog at his suggestion, I looked for the name Dornfeld. It was not there. Then I looked for a related family, Kirchgatter. In my recent book, *Schwefel-Dornfeld-Schoenike Genealogy*, I had written: "According to family tradition the Kirchgatters had been driven out of Salzburg in 1734 when all Protestants were exiled". Baron von Frank looked up the reference in the relevant volume of

<sup>o</sup> These matriculation records were published in a series from 1872 to 1913 under the title, *Catalogus studiosorum scholae Marpurgensis*. M.R.

photostats from the Prussian archives, and we read as follows: List of those persons who have settled in the towns of the New Oder River reclamation area, in the Royal Prussian District of Wrietzen: Emigrants, their names, their place of origin in Austria, the value of the property they had to leave behind—No. 3, *Johann Kirchgatter*, from Traunkirchen, 200 Gulden; No. 11, *Simon Kirchgatter*, from Traunkirchen, 200 Gulden. It was a pleasure, too, to browse in the Baron's extensive genealogical library, which included many books on emigrants to America, not only from German-speaking lands but also from Holland and France.

The former Prussian Archives at Berlin, now called the West Berlin Archives, were re-organized after the late war. They were able to give me information about Johann August Schwebel as early as 1949.

The Genealogical Society of the Mormon Church is very active in the area, with headquarters at West Berlin-Dahlem. In 1954 it began to publish a genealogical magazine called *Deseret* with a subtitle, *Genealogical News*. Originally printed in German, it now (1956) appears monthly in two editions, German and English, under the editorship of Erich Krause. One of the projects the Society is undertaking is a catalog of individual names (German *Kartei*), showing family connections and common ancestors. It is microfilming all church registers available in Berlin, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. A single issue of the magazine (May 1954) lists 250 parishes in Silesia for which it has completed the filming. Some of these records begin as early as 1575. In the same issue are printed requests for information about missing relatives of refugees. The Society has microfilmed the Archives of the Teutonic Knights, formerly a part of the State Archives at Königsberg in East Prussia, now found in Goslar, 50 miles S. E. of the city of Hanover, Lower Saxony; the German Guild Records of the city of

Reval, Esthonia; and the Archives of the Province of Mecklenburg, now under Russian control.<sup>7</sup> Everyone interested in German genealogical resources owes a debt of gratitude to the Genealogical Society of Utah.

Many of the German State Archives now have gaps. Fortunately, there are many private collections and catalogs, but as yet their owners are not financially able to publish them. It is from these that the gaps will have to be filled.

The position of American genealogical research in relation to the German-speaking countries—Germany, Austria, and Switzerland—in 1957, is similar to that of American genealogical research in relation to Great Britain in 1880.

The New England Historic Genealogical Society began publishing its *Register* in 1845. Most of the work done during the next 30 years was by searchers for individual families. About 1870, far-sighted men like Henry F. Waters pointed out that much greater results could be achieved if broad systematic search were carried out. In 1880 the Society persuaded Mr. Waters to go to England and undertake such work. He devoted nearly 20 years to it. His findings were published in the *Register* as "Genealogical Gleanings in England". After his retirement other capable persons continued the work in England. Thus it became possible to collate British records with those of America.

Today we can point to individual genealogists in America and in German lands who are co-operating in just such work. But what is needed is a nation-wide union of genealogical societies to find the means to finance a program of systematic research in German-speaking lands and to collate the findings with American records.

Genealogical research can be a great adventure!

<sup>7</sup> Information received from Walter Hilbig, Salt Lake City, the Society's expert on German genealogical research.



## 2. SEARCHING FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

By KARL FRIEDRICH VON FRANK

Schloss Senftenegg, Post Ferschnitz, Niederösterreich, Austria

It is well-known that the German element in the United States constitutes a valuable, integrating component of the population and that it has contributed its proportionate share of distinguished men and women. Today there are countless Americans with non-German names who number some German forebears among their female ancestral lines.

Once the family historian has discovered that there is a "German immigrant ancestor", he is plagued by the desire to determine where that ancestor came from and who his forebears were. Search for these data often proves it to be a difficult undertaking, because helpful references are rare in American sources. Even in the most important sources, such as those dealing with the immigration of German-speaking persons to Pennsylvania during the 18th century, the place of origin is not indicated or is given in summary fashion by states or provinces. The familiar notation "Palatinate" was applied indiscriminately to persons from Austria, Baden, Bavaria, Württemberg, Hesse, Alsace, or Switzerland, who traveled down the Rhine to embark at Rotterdam.

It is at this point that research in Europe must begin, *i.e.*, a systematic study must be undertaken of the archives concerning emigrants and the collating of the findings with data from American sources. Application of this method has been productive. A considerable number of persons named in immigration lists have been identified with references to their homes. Many persons, too, have been found whose names do not appear in the ship-lists but who did reach America.

For many years I have been gathering comprehensive data of this nature, and have filed them in a card catalog. Some have been of great value in specific problems, others lie ready to be used. Other searchers, using the same method, *e.g.* Dr. Adolf Gerber, Otto Langgut, Dr. Ernst Steinemann, etc. have published valuable lists in the Yearbooks of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society. Nor should we overlook a pioneer work published by the National Genealogical Society, Faust and Brumbaugh's *Lists of*

*Swiss Emigrants in the 18th Century to the American Colonies* (2 vols., 1920-25).

When the sources available offer no clue to the former home of an emigrant, the European genealogist must search in those localities where the family name occurred during the time of emigration. Of course, it is useless if the family bore such a common occupational name as *Müller*, *Schmidt*, or *Schneider*, which arose independently in every community. On the other hand, some names are definitely identified with certain areas, *e.g.* *Eisenhauer*, which is typical of the Odenwald region in Hessen. Hans Nicolaus Eisenhauer, aged 50, with his wife Anna Margareta (Strubel), and their 2 sons and 1 daughter landed in Philadelphia, 17 November 1741. From them descends President Eisenhower.

To be successful in such long-range searching, the genealogist must be conversant with the derivations and the distribution of German family names. Also, he must have a broad knowledge of relevant publications and archives. No matter how large a fee the client may be willing to pay, the searcher can not undertake to identify "an ancestor named Schmidt who came from Germany". Much more likelihood of success exists when the searcher knows the names and localities of persons who came on the same ship with the client's ancestor, because relatives or neighbors or members of the same parish often emigrated together.

The emigrants' names in Rupp's *Thirty Thousand Names and Pennsylvania German Pioneers* were often transcribed by English clerks who were not competent in the German language. Hence some names were disfigured almost beyond recognition. In Rupp's work many names were misread. Most of them have been corrected by Strassburger and Hinke by means of the photographic reproduction of the original records. But even their excellent work contains some errors.

An interesting contingent of early German immigrants were the Mennonites. On 6 October 1683 the ship *Concord* arrived in the port of Philadelphia with 13 families from Crefeld on the Rhine.

These were the first Germans to establish a settlement in Pennsylvania, which they appropriately called Germantown. Research concerning their German background is difficult, because of the scarcity of church records and because of their having moved from place to place before emigrating.

German emigration from the former Austria-Hungary is much smaller, percentage-wise, than that from Germany. Two groups, however, deserve mention, the Salzburger and the Moravians.

During the period 1731-44 the Archbishop of Salzburg exiled all Protestants. Assured of the King of Prussia's protection, most of them settled in East Prussia, whence their descendants were expelled in 1945. Others settled in Prussia proper, near the Oder River. A small portion in 1734 emigrated to America and established a settlement in Georgia. Detailed accounts of the Salzburger settlers in Georgia have been preserved in the works of Samuel and Johannes Urlsperger (1745 and 1747.) I have numerous references in my card catalog, some of them photostats of records in the Prussian archives at Berlin, which mention the former homes of the exiles and their new homes in Prussia. While precise information about their original homes is available for those who left the Gastein area, that is not the case for the members of the Georgia Salzburger colony. My recent investigations reveal that a number of Georgia families who are credited with Salzburger ancestry are actually descended from families that came from Württemberg in 1750-55.

The history of the Moravian Brethren is better documented. Their archives in Herrnhut, which lies in Oberlausitz, Saxony (now under Soviet control), and the Moravian Archives at Winston-Salem, N. C., contain a wealth of biographical and genealogical material. Thus it is possible to fix the geographic source of the first comers. But to trace the ancestry of some of them would be more difficult, because it might involve research behind the Iron Curtain.

Eighteenth century emigration was usually a group project. We know that some individuals and families came independently. They are not listed in groups,

and information about them is the more difficult to find.

Conditions in the 19th century were more favorable for individuals to migrate. Obsolescent feudal forms had been abolished, permits to emigrate were more readily given by the governments, and transportation facilities were improved from one decade to another. Emigration from Europe grew into millions.

From thousands of inquiries that have come to me the conviction grows that Americans who are interested in their family history are not familiar with the abundance of genealogical sources available to them at home, especially the publications of the many historical and genealogical associations. Not infrequently I have been able to answer a question about an "immigrant ancestor" from publications in my own library which the inquirer could have consulted in his own country.

There is no area of research better suited than genealogy to build bridges of mutual understanding and sympathy between individuals and nations, to promote mutual respect and good will, to demonstrate the insanity of blind nationalistic hatred. It is particularly important for us Germans to cultivate genealogical interest with the American people, with whom we have ties of blood and who today constitute the greatest power in the civilized world, and, admittedly, are the guardians of Western culture.

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### 3. POSSIBILITIES FOR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE PALATINATE

By DR. FRITZ BRAUN, *Director*, Archives, Kaiserslautern

What help for genealogical research can we expect to find in the Palatinate? Before we can answer that question, we must find the answer to the broader question: What co-operative effort can be made in America and in the Palatinate as a prerequisite for success in genealogical research?

Statements concerning the place from which emigrants set out and the place to which they intended to go are often missing in both Palatine and American records. The earlier the period of migration, the more fragmentary the information. Naturally the record of departure can not be specific about the destination, which was described generally as "America", "Pennsylvania", or "Maryland". Few emigrants knew just where they would settle.

Then, too, we must not assume that every person who obtained permission to do so actually did emigrate. To be sure of the fact, one must find his name in a list of ship's passengers or in a parish or civil record in his new home in America. Again, there are many cases where there is no evidence available in the Palatinate because people emigrated secretly. Finally, one must remember that the ravages of war and fire have destroyed a portion of the relevant documents.

In American sources one may find notes concerning the former home or family connections of an immigrant. Deter-

mining the home is complicated by the fact that there were many changes of territorial boundaries and sovereignty. During the 18th century, when the Palatinate was larger than it was in the 19th century, many persons who were not natives were labeled "Palatines", e.g. the Swiss who stayed in the area temporarily and migrated with the natives.

Frequently, the place of origin was given in general terms. In the 18th century "Zweibrücken" rarely referred to the city but to the duchy of Zweibrücken. During the 19th century, when the Palatinate was held by Bavaria, Palatines were put down on the passenger lists as "Bavarians" or "Rhenish Bavarians". An oral statement coupled with the ignorance of geographic and historical relationships often distorts the name of a place so badly that it can be corrected only by someone in the Palatinate.

Surely there are both in the Palatinate and in America many sources as yet untouched which could be exploited for genealogical research. The essential thing is that here and in America the sources be systematically analyzed and the results be collected and exchanged. If such work could be carried out thoroughly, it would lay the foundations for a comprehensive joint publication, containing the names of emigrants, the time of their departure, their family background, and their destination. Surely that would be a great ser-

vice to the cause of genealogical research in both countries.

The first step in such a cooperative project might well be the preparation of a fourth volume for the widely used work of Strassburger and Hinke, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers* (1934). This fourth volume would supplement the other three volumes by supplying the places from which the passengers came and the places where they settled, as far as these can be found in American or European sources.

How much labor, time, and money have been sacrificed by the individual researcher to solve a single problem! How often he has had to abandon the search because of the fragmentary nature of the documentary evidence. If all the information thus far unearthed had been accessible, he might have succeeded! No single genealogist can go it alone; he must give and accept help. This can be illustrated by two examples.

First is the case of Hans Nickel Bauersachs (Bowersox), concerning whom there seemed to be no information in the Palatinate. He arrived in Philadelphia 15 August 1750, aboard the ship *Royal Union*. In the Lutheran Church register at Goshenhoppen (later Churchville, now Bally), Pa., Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg made a detailed entry about Bauersachs, his home town in the Palatinate, and even his parents and their home town in Bavaria. Thus the Goshenhoppen church register contains data about the Bauersachs family which can not be found in the church registers of the Palatinate. Thanks to this, it was possible to trace without a break the family's removal from Bavaria to the Palatinate and thence to America.

The second case involves seven couples that arrived in Philadelphia 19 September 1738 as passengers on the *Thistle*. Emigrants in the 18th century often undertook the voyage in small groups. Time and again we find proof that on a particular ship there was a group of persons who had come from the same area or even the same town, and who were related to each other. In America they settled in the same community. Their children intermarried. The names of their friends and relatives appeared in their marriage

and baptismal certificates. Evidence of this kind from America made it possible to prove the relationships of the seven couples on the *Thistle*.

Hans Jakob Cloter (Cloder, Clothier) of Rimschweiler, Palatinate, was the son of Jakob and Margaretha (Kiefer) Cloter, of Breitenbach, Palatinate, and grandson of Hans Jakob Cloter (of Glarus, Switzerland) who married Maria Rueb at Zweibrücken in 1662. In 1722, at Hornbach, Hans Jakob the younger married Anna Maria Bracher (Brocher, Prager), daughter of Hans Georg Bracher, who married at Hornbach in 1693, Susanna Katharina Born (of Swiss origin) and granddaughter of Hans Nickel and Euphrosina Bracher, of Ernstweiler, Palatinate. Hans Georg and Susanna Katharina (Born) Bracher had other daughters: Anna Maria Elisabeth, married 1713, Paul Schaefer (son of Heinrich and Anna [Leyonberger] Schaefer, of Rimschweiler; Anna Margaretha, married (1718) Johann Nickel Leiner (son of Joh. Barthel and Anna Dorothea [Schmidt] Leiner, of Rimschweiler); Maria Sophia, married Joh. Philipp Gohn, of Rimschweiler; and Maria Barbara, married at Oberbexbach, 19 September 1728, Joh. Michael Schmelzer (Schmoelzer), son of Peter Schmelzer, who died before 1728. In the year 1738, aboard the ship *Thistle*, these interrelated families came to America: Hans Jakob and Anna Maria (Bracher) Cloter; Joh. Nickel and Anna Margaretha (Bracher) Leiner; Paul and Anna Maria Elisabeth (Bracher) Schaefer; Johann Philipp and Maria Sophia (Bracher) Gohn (together with his brothers and sisters-in-law, Johannes and Anna Rosina [Rosanna] Gohn, and Adam and Katherina Gohn); and Joh. Michael and Maria Barbara (Bracher) Schmelzer.<sup>1</sup>

In like manner, by combining information from American and German sources, we may be able to find the homes of many more emigrants and thus have a basis for genealogical research. The genealogical center, Heimatstelle Pfalz, at Stiftplatz 5, Kaiserslautern, stimulated by these examples, is developing a comprehensive card catalog, in which all findings, no mat-

<sup>1</sup> The mother of the Bracher girls also came on the *Thistle*: Susanna Katharina (Born) Bracher.



ter how fragmentary, are entered. Any one who wishes to search for the home of a Palatine emigrant will do well to direct an inquiry there, but only after he has exhausted the information available in America. The work of the Heimatstelle Pfalz would be promoted if Americans would send printed or manuscript family histories, especially if they include the information on the home of the emigrant ancestor.

With few exceptions the church registers in the Palatinate do not extend back as far as those in South Germany. Generally they begin at the end of the Thirty Years' War, about 1650, and some about 1700. Most of the older Protestant church registers have been deposited in the Archive of the Protestant State Church (Protestantische Landeskirchenarchiv) at Speyer. Some Protestant and Roman Catholic registers are in the Staatsarchiv (State Archive) at Speyer. Others are preserved in the town and city offices or

in the local rectories (*Pfarrämter*). Information concerning the 19th century may be obtained from the records of the Standesamt in each town or city. In the Palatinate these were begun in 1798.

The Co-operative Association of Palatine Genealogists (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Pfälzischer Familienforscher*) has its seat at Ludwigshafen am Rhein. Its official publication is the quarterly *Pfälzische Familien- und Wappenkunde* (published by Verlag Richard Louis, Schanzstrasse 74, Ludwigshafen am Rhein). This magazine has a regular supplement entitled, "Mitteilungen zur Wanderungs-geschichte der Pfälzer". It is edited by the Heimatsstelle at Kaiserslautern. Thus, for the year 1955 it is devoted to an account of emigrants from the Mennonite Congregation at Friedelsheim in the Palatinate during the first half of the 19th century, as recorded in the church records at home and in letters received from the emigrants in the United States.

#### 4. WHAT CAN THE ARCHIVES AT SPEYER OFFER AMERICAN GENEALOGY?

By DR. FRIEDRICH KREBS, *Director*

The archives in western and southwestern Germany (Speyer, Karlsruhe, Koblenz, and Stuttgart) contain much material of value for the study of 18th century emigration to America. This brief account will confine itself to the area of Speyer.

In the 18th century Protestant church registers one finds many marginal notes such as "Gone to the new land", or "emigrated to the New World", or "Pennsylvania" or "America". The frequency of such marginal notes varies with the interest of the clergyman who made the entry of a birth or a marriage. Thus we owe thanks to Pastors Friedrich Piton of the Lutheran Church at Frenckenfeld, Samuel Christian Thomae of the Lutheran Church at Billigheim, and Philipp Jacob Fleck of the Reformed Church at Zeiskam. Since documentary information about the 18th century emigrants is not abundant, the marginal notes are precious. If the note does not specify the year of emigration, we must assume that it occurred

after the date of the official entry. If such notation occurs opposite the record of a baptism, we may infer that both the child and his parents emigrated. Naturally, we check the death records; if the parents' names do not occur there, the conclusion is wholly clear, the entire family migrated.

We can not assume that the entire emigration from a particular village is indicated in the register. A pastor who was interested in such matters may have been succeeded by one who was not. A nearly complete record is found in the parish register of Thaleischweiler, now preserved in the Archives of the State Church (Pfälzisches Landeskirchenarchiv) at Speyer.<sup>1</sup>

Important, too, are the *Protokolle* (records) of the *Oberämter* (counties) of the

<sup>1</sup> The geographical locations of many places mentioned in this article (such as Thaleischweiler, Kandel, Billigheim, etc.) are described by Krebs and Rubincam in *Emigrants from the Palatinate to the American Colonies in the 18th Century*, pp. 6-7.

Electoral Palatinate. They contain summaries of petitions to be permitted to emigrate, the correspondence between the *Oberamt* (county) and the Electoral Government at Heidelberg, and finally, the decision of the latter in each case. As Dr. Braun stated in his article, it is not safe to assume that every person who obtained permission did actually emigrate. If the applicant's name does not occur in the death records in the parish register, he probably did leave. If his name appears in the list of passengers of a ship arriving in Philadelphia in the same year, there can be no doubt about his emigration.

Unfortunately, of the *Oberamtsprotokolle* of the Electoral Palatinate which are to be found in the Archives at Speyer, only those of Neustadt are reasonably complete for the entire 18th century. The archives at Karlsruhe and Koblenz have more such *Oberamtsprotokolle* of the Electorate.

More important are the so-called "Manumission" records. ("Manumission", from the Latin, means to let go from under one's hand, *i.e.* to set free.) A prerequisite to obtaining permission to emigrate was securing the release from the feudal obligations of serfdom. Very valuable are the manumission records of the duchy of Zweibrücken. The records in volume I, covering emigration to America from 1724 to 1749, were published in the Yearbook of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society for 1936. The records in volume II cover the period 1750-71, and they abound in references to emigration to America. They were published in vol. IV of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society's Yearbook.

A hitherto neglected source of information are the accounts of the *Landschreiberei* (Records Office) of the *Ämter* (local governments) and *Oberämter* (counties). Not every year of the 18th century is represented in the holdings of the Speyer Archives. These accounts reveal the amount of the fees an individual had to pay in order to obtain his freedom from feudal obligation, his "manumission". They also show how much personal property he had, and the amount of tax he had to pay, 10% on the value of the property he was taking out of the country.

These account records of the Electoral Palatinate throw light on migration to America about the middle of the 18th century. So also do those of the countship of Hanau-Lichtenberg. But none of them have as much genealogical value as those of the duchy of Zweibrücken. It must be remembered that the manumission and tax records refer only to persons who migrated with the knowledge and consent of the Government. Many more apparently left the homeland secretly, not with but in spite of the Government's knowledge and blessing. To find them we must search family records or those of the *Waizenschreiberei* (office dealing with orphans) and *Landschreiberei*, comparable to our courts that supervise the settling of estates.

The record of the settlement of a decedent's estate included the names of his heirs, and some of them have a note, "Emigrated to America" or "Living in Pennsylvania" or "an heir in America". In order to benefit by his inheritance the person in America had to send a power of attorney to a friend or relative in Germany. Hence the record of a case may contain one or more letters from the emigrant, showing his residence in America.

In the archives at Speyer are a great many such family records, especially in the sections and records designated as *Ausfautheiakten* of Billigheim, Hassloch, Landstuhl, Kandel, Kirchheimbolanden, Edenkoben, Hombach, Homburg, and Gernersheim.

How profitable it is to combine German records with American sources concerning the same emigrant is illustrated by the following extract from a story of emigration from the county of Oppenheim, 1742-49. In 1742 it was reported from Oberingelheim that Philipp Odernheimer, Peter Weitzel, Ulrich Strassburger, and Nicolaus Dörr's widow permitted their sons, who had been enrolled in the most recent conscription for military service, to go to the New World. With the knowledge of the entire community, they gave each of the young men 100 florins and a variety of foodstuffs for the journey. The Government held the Chief Magistrate of Oberingelheim responsible. American sources reveal that Johannes Oderheimer, Johann Paul Weytzel, Johann Henrich



Dörr, and Johann Andreas Strassburger were passengers aboard the ship *Loyal Judith* which arrived in Philadelphia in September 1742.

In this article I have discussed only 18th century records relating to emigration to America. The 19th century emigration was, of course, much greater in volume and the records of that movement

are abundant. Every county (*Bezirk*) has lists of emigrants. Here, too, deaths and wills caused immigrants in America to send powers of attorney. The records of the counties in the Speyer Archives have not yet been completely indexed. But research on 19th century emigration from the Palatinate to America should meet with few obstacles.

## 5. SOURCES FOR HESSIAN GENEALOGY

By DR. HEINZ F. FRIEDERICHs

*Civil Registers.* A national law, effective 1 January 1876, made the civil registration of all persons, including vital statistics and personal status, compulsory in all Germany. Previous to that time several parts of Hesse had established their own systems. Rhenish Hesse, at the order of French occupation authorities, established one in 1798. The original registrations are to be found in the local registration bureaus (*Standesämter*); duplicates are in the State offices (*Landesgerichte*) at Mainz. The duchy of Nassau introduced the system in 1817, but assigned the matter to the senior clergyman in each community. These registers are to be found either in the Evangelical or the Roman Catholic rectory of the community. The Free City of Frankfurt, which had established civil registration as early as 1533, improved it in 1851. These registers are to be found in Registration Bureau I (*Standesamt I*) in the "Römer" at Frankfurt-am-Main.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

*Church Books.* Church registers (*Kirchenbücher*) are the most important source. They extend back into the 17th century, in some instances much earlier. In order to use them, however, the genealogist should know the church affiliation of the person for whom he is searching.

In 1790 the Rhine-Main area consisted of some 200 distinct governmental areas. Naturally those that were ruled by ecclesiastical functionaries were and are predominantly Roman Catholic, e.g. the archdioceses of Mainz and Trier, the bishoprics of Fulda, Speyer, and Würzburg, and the holdings of the Teutonic Knights and of the Knights of St. John. In other areas in which the ruler was a layman belonging to the Roman Church,

the majority of the inhabitants were Catholics.

Protestantism in Germany produced two major churches, the Lutheran and the Reformed. Territories ruled by Hessian landgraves of various lines, by Nassau counts, or belonging to the free cities of Frankfurt, Friedberg, Gelnhausen, and Wetzlar, were predominantly Lutheran, although in a few territories the Reformed Church prevailed. In others, there existed a Lutheran and a Reformed church side by side. After 1817-36 the two churches were united to form the Evangelical State Church of Hesse.

Church registers today are generally to be found in the various rectories. But in Darmstadt, Marburg, and Frankfurt they are to be found in the State Archives. Such minority denominations as the Huguenot or the Old Catholic maintain their own registers. The Mennonites in Rhenish Hesse at times maintained separate church registers. Fortunately for the genealogical searcher there exist excellent printed finding lists.<sup>1, 4</sup>

Jewish congregations maintained registers, written in Hebrew, containing records of circumcisions and deaths. In addition, at the order of the government, other registers (in German) were maintained by rabbis or lay officials, some as early as the 17th and 18th centuries. In the grand duchy of Hesse these are to be found in the local registration bureau (*Standesamt*), and duplicates in the local courts.<sup>5, 6</sup>

In addition to church registers there are other records maintained by churches, some uninterruptedly over a long period, such as a register of intentions of marriage (usually "banns" were publicly read at least twice before the ceremony was

performed), lists of persons confirmed, lists of communicants, minutes of congregational meetings, and financial records. Many churches also have card catalogs of fees collected, registers, and pedigrees.

*Archival Holdings.* There are a variety of civil records to be found in the archives, such as lists of citizens, tax registers, tithe registers, wills and inventories of decedents' belongings, petitions, civil financial accounts, real estate transfers, mortgages, lists of men in military service, etc. Most of these records are located in the State Archives at Darmstadt, Marburg, and Wiesbaden. Many are to be found in the larger city archives, such as Frankfurt and Mainz. Archives of smaller places and records of noble families and of university students contain data of genealogical value. Very important is the Federal Archive, Frankfurt Division, because it contains a great many records of law suits and legal procedures.<sup>8, 9</sup>

*Libraries.* Books and manuscripts containing genealogical data are located in the State Libraries at Darmstadt, Kassel, and Wiesbaden, as well as in the larger city libraries and the university libraries, e.g. Frankfurt, Giessen, Mainz, and Marburg. Genealogical associations in Hesse occasionally issue mimeographed lists of their holdings.

*Museums.* The genealogist may find stimulation and new leads in the museums containing such items as documents of guilds, lists of masters of a particular guild, portraits, pictures of houses, coats of arms, and seals.<sup>10</sup>

*Hessian Genealogical Associations.* Information concerning genealogical sources, methods, results, and publications may be obtained from the following associations: Gesellschaft für Familienkunde in Kurhessen und Waldeck, Goethestrasse 74, at Kassel; Familienkundliche Gesellschaft für Nassau und Frankfurt, Loreleystrasse 3, Frankfurt-Höchst; Vereinigung für Familien- und Wappenkunde zu Fulda, Tannenbergerstrasse 6, Fulda; and Hessische Familiengeschichtliche

Vereinigung, Osannstrasse 51, Darmstadt. These associations together form the Co-Operative Union of Genealogical Associations of Hesse (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der familienkundlichen Gesellschaften in Hessen). They jointly publish the quarterly periodical, *Hessische Familienkunde*, of which the present writer is the editor (address: Dehnhardtstrasse 32, Frankfurt-Eschersheim, Hesse).

*Literature.* Genealogical literature has been appearing for centuries. The searcher should consult the literature of the area in which he wishes to work. This is made easier by the fact that the literature of each area has been discussed in a special guide book. Recent and current literature is listed in the annual bibliographies compiled by the present writer in *Hessische Sippen*, since 1927; *Der Hessische Familienforscher*, since 1948; *Hessische Familienkunde*, since 1952; *Forschungen zur hessische Familien- und Heimatkunde*, since 1954.

*Heraldry.* Apart from older publications, such as Siebmacher's, the most important book for Hessian heraldry is Knodt's, which is to be published in 12 volumes, beginning in 1956.<sup>11</sup>

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## 6. GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN HESSE-DARMSTADT

By DR. ADAM HELDMANN, Gross Bieberau, Odenwald, Hesse

Amidst all the changes of boundaries and sovereignty undergone by the Hessian lands between 1500 and 1945, only the southern part, the landgraviate of Hesse-Darmstadt (since 1806 the grand duchy of Hesse), with its capital at Darmstadt, remained independent.

The grand duchy benefitted by the reforms of 1806-13. The numerous little areas in Germany, some 3000, which had been ruled by petty nobles (*Standesherrn*) nominally responsible to the Emperor, were subordinated to the rule of the larger states within which they lay. (On an 18th century map they looked like pockmarks on the face of the realm.) The grand duchy acquired about 50 such "enclaves".

During the revolution of 1918 Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig was deposed, and the state took the name of *Volksstaat Hessen* (People's State of Hesse). The most southerly part of this state was the province of Starkenburg. (Since 1937 this name is no longer official.) Before 1813 its face was dotted with 22 semi-independent enclaves. Thus, a large part of the Odenwald belonged to the Counts of Erbach. Another part was under the jurisdiction of the diocese of Worms, still another under that of the archdiocese of Mainz. These former differences are reflected today in the religious affiliations of the inhabitants, *e. g.* those of Starkenburg and Erbach are Protestant, those of the enclaves once ruled by Worms and Mainz are predominantly Roman Catholic. Knowledge of these facts is important for a genealogist.

As already stated in this series, church registers were the most important sources of genealogical data before 1876. The oldest of these reach back into the 16th century. Thus, that at Gross Bieberau begins with the year 1576. Doubtless, most church registers went back equally far, but many were lost during the ravages of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48). From 1650 to the present the church registers and archives have been preserved with great care. Only during World War II did they suffer. About 25 in our area were lost or destroyed.

Darmstadt has long been the cultural and intellectual center of the area. About 1935 a center for genealogical research was established there and housed in the former residence of the grand duke. Every church register in the state was to be brought there, to be copied or photographed, and every entry in it was to be copied on a card index (*Kartei*). Many volunteers cheerfully gave of their time without remuneration in order to save the precious original and to make its contents readily available for historical and genealogical study. But when the city was almost completely destroyed by an air attack in 1944, the Residence, housing the State Library, the State Archives, and the catalog of church registers, was burned out. Historians and genealogists must now seek information elsewhere.

Fortunately, many local archives have remained. They are the property of the towns and are in the care of informed archivists who are responsible to the burgomasters (mayors).

As for the church registers, most of them had been returned to their parishes after their contents had been catalogued and indexed at the Center in Darmstadt. It is possible that the work of the Center will be resumed and completed.

Under present circumstances, the contributions of individual searchers become significant. One schoolmaster had completed a detailed card index of the church registers of the Modau Valley and kept it in his home. The registers themselves happened to be in the archives at Darmstadt in 1944 and were lost. His card catalog is still available, however. Another had culled out of the archives extensive data about emigration from Hesse-Darmstadt. The sources are lost but his index is invaluable.

Let us compare the genealogical data contained in church registers with data in civil archives. The former give us an outline sketch of our forefathers, but the latter fill in the details and give us a picture of them and their times. From the civil archives we learn about their homes, the land they occupied, their achievements, their economic status. If

we are interested in the question of heredity, such as health, we find such information in the old muster lists.

Town archives now assume great importance. In them the experienced searcher can find a wealth of material which not only supplements the entries in the church registers but throws light on conditions existing before the church registers were begun. Thus the books of official acts (*Gerichtsbücher*) of Gross Bieberau reach back to 1530. In them one finds recorded the history of every piece of property, every change of ownership, giving the name of the grantor and of the grantee, the names of owners of adjacent properties, and the sale price. The lists (*Rede-Register*), with complete lists of the inhabitants, go back to 1480, more than a decade before the discovery of America. There are old platbooks showing the owners of the pieces of ground and houses, and in some cases copies of the deeds. Also of great interest are the manumission certificates (*Ledigenbriefe*) showing that a man had been released from the obligation of serfdom. References to emigration, too, appear in the official acts.

After I had lost my home and library in the destruction of Darmstadt, I returned to my ancestral home, Gross Bieberau. With determination I dug into the church registers and the town archives, and published a pamphlet entitled *Gross Bieberau Bevölkerung vor und nach dem Pestjahr 1635* (The Popu-

lation of Gross Bieberau before and after the Year of Pestilence 1635). In this little work I cover all of the inhabitants of the town from 1500, giving the history of every family and every property-owner's home, and his economic status. I looked into the statistics on emigration and was amazed to find how many families and individuals had left the town to go to the United States.

Once the study of local history and genealogy has caught a person, it will not let him go! Naturally it demands of him a great deal of technical knowledge, time, patience, and devotion. But the effort is rewarding. How great is the satisfaction when once again one has found something for which he has been searching for years!

The question is often asked why the results of such local research are not more widely publicized and printed. The answer is simple: lack of funds. Both the government and the individual need all the resources they can gather for their economic recovery. We are happy that our genealogical and historical associations have survived and are able to carry on both their research and their publications.

The Hessian Family History Association (*Hessische Familiengeschichtliche Vereinigung*), Staatsarchiv im Schloss, (16) Darmstadt, Hesse, will be glad to answer brief questions on genealogical matters at cost, and will recommend a qualified researcher for further work.

## 7. CONCERNING GENEALOGY IN SWITZERLAND

By DR. W. H. RUOFF, Zürich

Switzerland today is a federal union of 25 cantons, which vary in area from 37 to 7113 square kilometers (15 square miles to 2774 square miles), and in population from 13,000 to 800,000. All of them enjoy equal rights with the Federal Union. About 72 per cent of the people speak German as their mother tongue, 20 per cent French, 6 percent Italian, and 1 percent Rätoromannic.<sup>1</sup> Before 1800 there

were practically only two religious organizations, the Reformed and the Roman Catholic. Today 56 per cent of the population belong to the former and 41 per cent to the latter. According to the religious affiliation of the governmental unit under which one lived, one was either Reformed or Roman Catholic. Areas or communities in which Reformed and Roman Catholics were mixed could hardly be found, in fact they occur only in areas which were ruled jointly by a Reformed and a Roman Catholic canton of the Federal Union. There was no toleration for other forms of Christianity, such

<sup>1</sup> The Rätoromannic (Rhaeto-Roman) language, used by the mountain folk of the valleys of the Grisons and the head waters of the Rhine, is derived from the Latin of the ancient Roman legions in Switzerland. It is made up of Latin and Romansch elements. (*The Encyclopedia Americana*, Victory edition, 1945, vol. XXVI, p. 146.)—Editor.



as the Baptists. During the Middle Ages Jews were permitted to settle in a few remote places, but after the 15th century not in the larger cities like Zürich and Bern. Not until the 19th century did any change in policy occur.

A person was not and is not today a citizen of Switzerland as such, but basically he is a citizen of one of the more than 3000 communities (*Gemeinden*). Through this he becomes a citizen of the canton, and finally a citizen of Switzerland. This multiplicity of citizenship—resulting from a long history—is reflected also in the matter of genealogy. One may well state that conditions vary from community to community, and even more, from canton to canton.

Nevertheless, it is safe to make some generalizations.

The church registers of baptisms and marriages begin earlier in the Reformed Church than in the Roman Catholic Church, because in the former they were introduced through the influence of Zwingli, the Reformer, who died in 1531, while in the latter they were introduced by a resolution of the Council of Trent in 1563. Registers of inhabitants, too, appear earlier in Reformed communities. Or, perhaps, they were more carefully preserved. In general, archival material was better and more abundant in the cities than in the villages.

In the German portion of Switzerland the system of archives was not as well developed as in those portions where a Romance language was spoken, for in the latter the office of a notary played a great part.

One can never predict what source-materials one will have to use in order to build up genealogical lines. It is noteworthy that there are almost no records of emigration—a matter of importance when one attempts to trace the Swiss ancestry of an American family. Genealogical research in the past has varied much from area to area. Of extant genealogies the oldest deal with noble and patrician families. Next come those of burghers, the upper social level.

In the city of Bern toward the end of the 17th century there were prepared the first official lineage books which recorded the entire membership of citizens ar-

ranged by families. The purpose of these compilations was to furnish proof as to who actually was a citizen of the city and hence entitled to participate in the government of the city and its outlying territories.

Subsequently, in the 18th and early part of the 19th centuries, in a great many cities and in some villages private initiative produced lineage books of all families that could claim citizenship. These books were based upon the alphabetized church registers. Some of them, because the compiler had used valuable supplementary sources, are really outstanding. Some were used early in the 19th century to establish official registers of citizens. For the most part, however, the official registers were based upon the family registers maintained by the local clergy. In fact, until 1876 the civil government required the clergy to maintain records of births, marriages and deaths for civil purposes. In those areas which about 1800 were temporarily annexed to France, French officials introduced purely civil registers concerning the inhabitants (*Zivilstandesregister*). Since 1 January 1876, such civil registers are being maintained by civil officials according to the regulations prescribed by the Federal Government of Switzerland. In the maintenance of lineage books uniform procedure was achieved during the decade 1920-30, so that parents and children and all pertinent data concerning them are placed together. Previous to that time, some cantons had made such provisions, others had never done so.

The number of genealogies prepared in Switzerland is vast. Many of them have been listed in printed bibliographies, others are being included in current lists. Then, too, a number of genealogical and heraldic societies help their members carry on research but do not carry on any projects of their own. The overall genealogical organization is the *Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Familienforschung* (Swiss Society for Family Research).<sup>2</sup> It has sections centered in Zürich, Bern, Luzern (including the central portion of Switzerland), Solothurn, Basel, Sanct Gall, and Appenzell, all in the German-speaking area, and Neuchâtel in the

<sup>2</sup>In 1956 (when this article was written) the President of the Gesellschaft was Professor Dr. Herman Bleuler, of Kussnacht bei Zurich.

French-speaking area. The society publishes a periodical, *Der Schweizer Familienforscher*.

When a Swiss speaks of America without using any specific addition to the term, he means the U. S. A. That is quite natural, for there is hardly a single person in Switzerland who does not have definite knowledge of relatives living in the United States, or who does not believe that somewhere there he has distant family connections. To be sure, correspondence between them often has lapsed, largely because the second generation of immigrants either can not understand or write the language of their forebears, and because few people in Switzerland before 1900 learned to speak and write English. All this applies to Swiss emigration of recent years. In 1910 the population of the United States was 92,000,000, including 125,000 persons of Swiss birth. How important a figure this is from the Swiss viewpoint becomes clear to us when we consider what per cent these 125,000 persons were of Switzerland's total population of 3,750,000. It is more than three per cent!

We Swiss are happy when an American citizen remembers the land of his forebears and seeks information about ancestors or relatives. Let me give a few tips which should help him to secure the desired information with a minimum of effort.

First, he should collect all the facts and the evidence available in the U. S. A. If there is a birth certificate, a baptismal record, or a marriage certificate, a passport, some old correspondence extant, he should secure it. To avoid misinterpretation on his part, he should have all such documents photostatted.

A Swiss passport always indicates the home of the bearer or the place of which he is a citizen, in language such as this, *Bürgerort*, *Heimatsort*, or *Heimatberechtigt*. Having determined that much, the

American should direct his inquiry to the civil registration office (*Zivilstandesamt*) of that place. He must distinguish carefully between canton and town or city (*Gemeinde*). If the passport states "Bülach in Kanton Zürich", he should send his inquiry to Bülach, not Zürich.

If there are no documents available, it becomes all the more important to gather other information, *e.g.* list not only the name of the person for whom you are searching but also the names of his brothers and sisters, and the names of other persons who may have come at the same time, and the approximate year of emigration. Even such a vague thing as a family tradition may help. A tradition usually has at least a minimum of fact. Certainly the emigrant's religious affiliation is valuable.

If the searcher does not know the place from which his ancestor emigrated but does know the canton, he should direct his inquiry to the State Archive of the canton. All official agencies demand fees for the information they are asked to look up. They do not actually carry on research. They are willing to recommend a competent genealogist in the area to be searched. The more accurate information he gets from America, the more quickly he can carry out his assignment.

In some cases people did not migrate directly from Switzerland to the U.S.A. In the 18th century a family might have stopped for a time in Alsace or the Palatinate, and then sailed with people of that region. On the other hand, when the list of passengers uses the term "Palatinate" or "Palatine", it does not exclude the possibility that there were among them some folk from the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

<sup>32</sup>In connection with Dr. Ruoff's article, the reader's attention is called to an important publication issued by the National Genealogical Society in two volumes (1920-25), namely, *Lists of Swiss Emigrants in the Eighteenth Century to the American Colonies*, by Faust and Brumbaugh.



## 8. THE AHNENPASS (ANCESTOR PASSPORT) OF NAZI GERMANY

By MILTON RUBINCAM and JOHN I. CODDINGTON

During the 12-year régime of the late unlamented Adolf Hitler (1933-45), genealogical research in Germany progressed rapidly. This was because the Führer (Leader), as he called himself, was obsessed with the idea that a "racially pure" Germanic people must be developed, a people uncontaminated with such alien elements as the Jews. He developed what he called *Der Begriff der arischen Abstammung* (the concept of Aryan descent). This concept was originated by a Frenchman, Comte Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, in a sociological treatise called *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1854), in which he advanced the theory that blond Aryans or Nordics are the superior race. He held that the French aristocracy consisted of those blond Aryans, descended from the Germanic invaders of Gaul in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., who were, consequently, superior to the original Gallo-Roman population.

Hitler's insistence on "purity" of race for all good Germans resulted in a mad scramble to trace descents in all lines at least as far back as 1800. Church and civil registers were consulted, and every effort was made to provide documentary evidence to prove "Aryan" origins. Numerous publications of excellent quality were issued to demonstrate the lack of Jewish blood not only in the average man-of-the-street but also in such political and intellectual giants as Bismarck and Goethe.

One of the products of the Nazi craze was the creation of the *Ahnenpass* (ancestor passport), published by the State Confederation of Civil Registrars of Germany (*Reichsbund der Standesbeamten Deutschlands E. V.*) at Berlin. The *Ahnenpass* was as important a document for the German to carry as a passport to visit a foreign country. Forty-eight pages in length, it described the Hitlerian concept of Aryanism, gave instructions concerning documentation of pedigrees and the proper filling out of the ancestor passport, and provided spaces for records of forebears in all families for six generations. Pages 12-13 contained the *Ahnen-*

*tafel* (ancestor table) for five generations; it provided only the names of the owner of the *Ahnenpass* and his direct ancestors. Pages 14-45 contained spaces for filling in the vital statistics of the bearer and his ancestors for six generations; each person was identified by an individual number.

The required information for each person in the pedigree was as follows: (1) Surname, (2) Christian name (designated as *Vornamen*, forename), (3) date of birth, (4) place of birth, (5), names of parents, (6) religion, (7) date of death, (8) place of death, (9) occupation, (10) citation of source, such as the church or civil registers, (11) certification as to the accuracy of the data by the appropriate civil and/or ecclesiastical authorities.

There were several supplements to the *Ahnenpass*, one including a continuation of the pedigree beyond the great-great-great-grandparents, and another consisting of a large folding chart showing the subject of the *Ahnenpass* and his ancestors in all lines for seven generations.

We have before us the *Ahnenpass* of an American of German ancestry, Mahlon Karl Andreas Schnacke, who was born at St. Paul, Minn., 30 August 1896, and died unmarried at the American Academy, Porta San Pancrazio, Rome, Italy, 4 November 1938.

Schnacke was educated at St. Paul Central High School and the University of Minnesota (B.A., 1917). He served in the U. S. Navy in 1918-19, was employed for a time by the St. Paul Public Library, and in 1923 entered the library training school of the New York Public Library, which awarded him the degree of M.A. in Library Science in 1925. After holding positions in the New York Public Library, the Prussian State Library (*Preussische Staatsbibliothek*) at Berlin, and the Brown University Library, Providence, R. I., he became Head Librarian of the American Academy at Rome, a post which he occupied from 1933 until his death. It was during his Berlin days that he acquired a bitter hatred for Hitler and for the principles and practices of the National Socialist Party. Neverthe-

less, he felt it expedient to acquire an Ahnenpass, which he carefully filled out, doubtless because of his frequent travels through Germany on genealogical searches.

As a young man Schnacke developed an intense interest in genealogy, and became an authority on the royal and noble families of Europe. He was especially interested in making a complete study of all the descendants, male and female, legitimate and illegitimate, of Maria Brankovic (1466-95), a Serbian princess who married Bonifazio (IV) Paleologo, Marchese di Monferrato, and was ancestress of all the Catholic royalties, many of the Catholic nobilities, and a sizable number of Protestant personages of Europe. He accumulated an outstanding genealogical library, printed, typed, and in manuscript, which he bequeathed to his friend, John Insley Coddington, who cherishes the books and papers as a great genealogical trust. Ultimately, the Schnacke manuscript collection will form a treasured part of the Library of the National Genealogical Society.

To illustrate the completeness of the information available on German families as a result of Hitler's Aryan mania, we extract data from Schnacke's Ahnenpass back to his great-grandparents, although he had carried the lines back another two generations. By so doing, we trace briefly families living in an area that thus far has been only slightly covered in previous years by the *Quarterly*.

1. Mahlon Karl Andreas Schnacke; b. at St. Paul, Minn., 30 Aug. 1896. Member, Evangelical Church.

#### Parents

2. Jacob Charles Schnacke; b. at Honey Creek, Wis., 23 Aug. 1852; Evangelical Church; d. at St. Paul, Minn., 3 March 1927; general secretary of an insurance company; m. at Minneapolis, Minn., 10 May 1882, to
3. Luise Emilie Bingenheimer; b. at Crow River, Wright Co., Minn., 25 May 1860; d. at St. Paul, Minn., 29 Nov. 1927.

#### Grandparents

4. (Rev.) Karl Andreas Schnake; b. at Unterlütbe, Westphalia, Germany, 27 July 1819; d. at Jefferson, Wis., 19

Feb. 1877; pastor, Evangelical Church; m. at Milwaukee, Wis., 8 Dec. 1847, to

5. Katharina Haack; b. at Mörs, Rheinland, 10 Nov. 1820; d. in childbirth, at Honey Creek, Wis., 23 Aug. 1852.
6. Jakob Bingenheimer; b. at Schwabsburg, Hesse-Darmstadt, 4 May 1830; d. at Minneapolis, Minn., 27 Aug. 1872; Reformed Church; occupation, miller; m. at Richfield, Wis., in April 1855 to
7. Catharina *Margarethe* Schneider; b. at Selzen, Rheinhessen, 27 Nov. 1835; d. at Minneapolis, Minn., 18 March 1910.

#### Great-Grandparents

8. Johann Hermann Schnake; b. at Unterlütbe, Westphalia, 12 Feb. 1781; d. there, 23 Jan. 1842; farmer, Schnakenhof (Schnake Farm), Unterlütbe; Evangelical Church; son of Johann Reinhard Schnake and his first wife, Anne Marie Elisabeth Klausmeyer; m. at Bergkirchen, Westphalia, 11 Oct. 1810, to
9. Sophia Charlotte Böhne; b. at Hadendhausen, Westphalia, 28 Jan. 1784; d. at Unterlütbe, 3 March 1857; Evangelical Church; daughter of Johann Wilhelm and Anna Maria Elisabeth (Klostermeier) Böhne.
10. Wilhelm Haack; b. at Baerl bei Mörs, Rheinland, 22 March 1777; day-laborer; Reformed Church; d. at Mörs, 29 Dec. 1839; son of Arndt and Anna Maria Agneta (Kortmeier) Haack; m. at Mörs, 1 March 1815, to his second wife,
11. Gertrude Breckenkamp; b. at Nieder Budberg, Westphalia, 15 Aug. 1779; d. at Mörs, 5 Jan. 1836; Reformed Church; daughter of Evert and Elisabeth (Hasshoff) Breckenkamp.
12. Johann Bingenheimer; b. at Schwabsburg, Hesse-Darmstadt, 2 Feb. 1796; d. there, 26 Oct. 1853; Reformed Church; son of Jost Heinrich and Anna Maria (Lux) Bingenheimer; m. at Schwabsburg, 10 Jan. 1819, to
13. Luise Christina Maurer; b. at Schwabsburg, 4 Aug. 1798; d. there, 25 March 1847; Reformed Church; daughter of Johannes and Katharina (Kessel) Maurer.



14. Johann Philipp Schneider; b. at Hahnheim, Rheinhessen, 10 Aug. 1809; d. at Minneapolis, Minn., 23 March 1890; Reformed Church; husbandman; son of Johann Philipp and Catharina Elisabetha (Fuchs) Schneider; m. at Hahnheim, 8 March 1834, to
15. Anna Maria Reichert; b. at Selzen, Rheinhessen, 5 Feb. 1807; d. at Minneapolis, Minn., 27 Dec. 1881; Reformed Church; daughter of Johann Georg and Susanna Maria (Weiffenbach) Reichert.

It will be observed from the foregoing that Schnacke and his parents were born in the United States, but that all four of his grandparents were born in Germany, and that they and two great-grandparents (Nos. 14 and 15) settled in Wisconsin and Minnesota in the late 1840's and early 1850's.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. Karl A. Schnake was a pioneer member of the Wisconsin Conference of the Evangelical-Reformed Church. His son, Jacob Charles, altered the spelling to Schnacke because he got tired of hearing Americans pronounce his name as "snake".





















